



**Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
VA MIDWEST HEALTH CARE NETWORK**
Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 23
Network Update
October 2012



www.visn23.va.gov

Natalie Dell - 2012 Olympian and VA research scientist is featured on YouTube to Raise Awareness for VA Mental Health Services.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detail&v=wbDYs

To help raise awareness for VA's Mental Health Hiring Initiative, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) created a Public Service Announcement (PSA) for Mental Health -- featuring Natalie Dell, a 2012 Olympic Medalist and a VA employee. The PSA supports VA's Mental Health Hiring Initiative to hire 1,600 mental health clinicians as well as nearly 300 support staff to its existing workforce to help meet the increased demand for mental health services.

Learn more about VA's Mental Health services:

<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/>



Smoking is the leading preventable cause of premature death and a leading cause of illness and mortality. Smoking and tobacco use cessation persists as one of the VA's biggest public health challenges. Many Veterans began using tobacco while in the military. The rate of smoking among Veterans in the VA health care system is higher than among the U.S. population. Approximately 70 percent of all smokers say they want to quit, but even the most motivated may try to quit five or six times before they are able to quit. Over 3 million Americans successfully quit smoking every year.

To help Veterans quit smoking and tobacco use, VA offers:

- Screening for tobacco use during primary care visits
- Individual counseling
- Prescriptions for nicotine replacement therapy, such as a nicotine patch or gum, or other medications
- Participation in evidence-based smoking cessation programs

Veterans are encouraged to talk with their VA provider to develop a plan for quitting.

Help is available online 24 hours a day/7 days a week at the [Quit Tobacco, Make Everyone Proud website](http://www.ucanquit2.org).

www.ucanquit2.org) The Department of Defense/TRICARE partnered with VA to give Veterans access to their tobacco cessation website including online tools, personalized quit plans and live chat

Minneapolis VA Opens Community Resource and Referral Center



The Minneapolis VA Health Care System opened a Community Resource and Referral Center (CRRC) at 1201 Harmon Place in Downtown Minneapolis. The CRRC -- one of 17 such centers opening around the country -- is part of the VA plan to end homelessness among veterans by 2015. On any given night, there are about 700 homeless veterans living in Minnesota. The center offers primary care and mental health counseling. Case managers are on site to assist with accessing services such as housing, jobs and education. The center has showers, laundry machines and computers. It is open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The CRRC is near downtown Minneapolis to make it easy to access other organizations. In addition to housing 30 VA staff, local community partners will also have office space in the center. The center began operations on Sept. 18. A dedication event was held Sept. 17; it was attended by more than 200 Veterans, elected officials, partners and VA staff

VA Medical Foster Home Project Certified at VA Black Hills Health Care System



When living at home becomes difficult, most people would rather remain in a home-like setting than move to an assisted living center. In moments like this, the VA Medical Foster Home (MFH) program can help.

MFH provides an alternative to nursing home placement for Veterans who may be chronically or terminally ill with limited social support. The program begins when a private individual or couple decides they want to become Caregivers, and take Veterans into their home. VA ensures the home and Caregivers meet high standards through inspections, background checks, references and CPR and First Aid certifications.

The MFH program at VA BHHCS was officially certified on Wednesday, August 29. There is currently one approved home in the Black Hills with two Veterans placed. If you are interested in becoming a Caregiver to a Veteran in need, please contact Gary McClure at 605-745-2000 ext. 92325.

Flu Season is Here – Step Up to Prevent the Flu

Flu season is upon us. Influenza (flu) presents health challenges not only to us as individuals, but to our families and our VA and neighborhood communities. Flu is a respiratory illness that spreads easily. It is caused by viruses that can change from year to year. Each year in the U.S., flu causes more than 226,000 hospitalizations and about 36,000 deaths. Even though most of these cases are among people age 65 and older, anyone can get the flu. This is why it is important for all of us to “step up” to help stop the spread of flu! Check with your VA provider or nearest VA facility to learn when flu shots will be offered in your area. To learn more go to <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/flu/prevention/index.asp>

[Step 1 – Get Your Flu Shot](#)

[Step 2 – Know How Flu is Spread](#)

[Step 3 - Know the Symptoms](#)

[Step 4 - Keep your Hands and Surfaces around you clean](#)

[Step 5 - Cover your cough and sneezes](#)

[Step 6 - Stay Home When Sick](#)





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Announcements and Calendar of Events for September 2012

October 3: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - Flu Shots offered at **St. Cloud Main Campus** from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (CDT) in Building 96 at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center, 4801 Veterans Dr., St. Cloud, Minn. Spouses, significant others, caregivers, and Veterans who are not enrolled for health care with the VA can also receive a seasonal flu shot at the St. Cloud VA Medical Center location only.

A fee of \$29 is required, and may be paid in cash or billed to the individual's health insurance. Spouses, significant others, caregivers and non-enrolled Veterans should bring their insurance or Medicare card to the clinic.

October 3: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - Flu Shots offered at **Brainerd VA Clinic** located at 722 NW 7th Street, Brainerd, Minn. The flu clinic will run from 9 a.m. - Noon and then from 1 - 3 p.m. (CDT).

October 3: [St. Cloud VA Health Care System](#) - Flu Shots offered at **Montevideo VA Clinic** located at 1025 North 13th St., Montevideo, Minn., from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (CDT).

October 3: [Fargo VA Health Care System](#) – **Healthy Living Class**, Bemidji VA Clinic located at 705 5th St, Bemidji, MN, 2 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. (CST)

October 5: [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) **Red Cross Blood Drive**, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. (CST)

October 4: [VA Black Hills Health Care System](#)- **OEF/OIF/OND Outreach** – Pine Ridge, SD at the Pine Ridge Veterans Building, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (MST)

October 8 – [Fargo VA Health Care System](#) – **Healthy Living Class**, Fargo Morning Session, located at 2101 Elm St N, Fargo, ND

October 9 [Minneapolis VA Health Care System](#) **Red Cross Blood Drive**, Minneapolis VA Medical Center, Flag Atrium, 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. (CST)

For more information on upcoming events, classes or weather alerts log on at:

VA Black Hills HCS - www.blackhills.va.gov

VA Central Iowa HCS - www.centraliowa.va.gov

Fargo VA HCS - www.fargo.va.gov

Iowa City VA HCS - www.iowacity.va.gov

Minneapolis VA HCS - www.minneapolis.va.gov

VA Nebraska W. Iowa HCS - www.nebraska.va.gov

Sioux Falls VA HCS - www.siouxfalls.va.gov

St. Cloud VA HCS - www.stcloud.va.gov

VISN 23 -

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HCS – Health Care System VA – Department of Veterans Affairs

For More information, call the Network Office at (612) 725-1968 or
Log on at www.visn23.va.gov or email sharyl.schaepe@va.gov